Colder weather for next week

27 January 2012 - Colder weather will affect the UK over the next few days as weather from the east wins the battle for dominance against the milder conditions that have prevailed so far this winter.

Temperatures are likely to be below average this weekend and through next week, bringing the longest spell of colder weather so far this winter.

The weekend will see widespread overnight frosts with maximum temperatures during the day of around 5 °C and temperatures of around -1 °C at night, with most places staying dry.

Chris Tubbs, Chief Forecaster at the Met Office, said: "At the moment we have a high pressure system over eastern Europe trying to push cold air in from the east, while milder Atlantic air is trying to push in from the west.

"The colder air is set to win over the next few days, bringing a risk of snow to western areas on Monday morning. Looking further ahead into February, there is uncertainty over how this finely balanced situation will play out, with colder conditions more likely to dominate but milder weather could still return."

Transcript: Cold weather brings risk of snow to the UK (PDF, 77 kB)

With the colder conditions, the Met Office will be issuing Cold Weather Alerts as part of the Cold Weather Plan developed by the Department of Health, the Health Protection Agency and Age UK to help reduce the impact of cold weather on people's health this winter.

Michelle Mitchell, Charity Director at Age UK said: "It may have been relatively mild so far this year but the winter can be a dangerous time for older people. Many people believe that the only risk of winter weather is getting a cold but the risk is much greater. Low temperatures raise blood pressure which puts people at a greater risk of heart attacks and strokes and well as increasing the likelihood and severity of flu and other respiratory problems.

"We want older people to be able to enjoy the winter and, most importantly of all, stay well. That is why we have linked up with the Met Office to get advance information to ensure that forewarned is forearmed when it comes to winter weather."

Patrick Sachon, Health Business Manager at the Met Office said: "With the first real cold snap of the winter, Age UK demonstrates just how valuable the Cold Weather Alert Service is to the more vulnerable sectors of the community.

"These alerts put everyone in a better position to respond to forecasts of severe weather, inform those who are most at risk from winter weather and what they can do to keep well."

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Cold weather brings risk of snow to the UK

Chris Tubbs – Chief Forecaster

We've seen a lot of mild and unsettled weather during this winter so far, but now we're going to have a prolonged spell and it's setting up over this weekend. We can see on this map here that we've got a lot of cold air indicated by the blue over here and this is pushing towards the UK and it's creating a battle ground against the mild and unsettled air out here to the west, indicated by the green and yellow colours. In this mild air there is some precipitation running down the western side and I think western parts of the UK, Wales and north western parts of the UK are most at risk really of this precipitation turning to snow particularly on higher ground so you need to keep an eye on the forecast over this weekend.

As we go into next week the cold weather continues to dominate, particularly across England and Wales as you can see on this graphic here. The other thing to notice is occasionally we get some wintery showers pushing into these south-eastern parts of the country. But most places will be dry and the emphasis really is on colder nights, quite clear frosts at night particularly across the south-eastern parts of the country. As we go through into the middle of the week next week then we can see that milder air does try and push into these north-western areas but the really cold air is still hanging on in south-eastern parts. So keep up to date with the forecast and see how long that cold air continues.